

The background of the cover is a large, dense crowd of people, rendered in a blue-tinted, hazy, and slightly blurred style. In the foreground, three individuals are clearly visible: a man on the left in a dark suit and light blue tie, a woman in the center with short brown hair wearing a purple shirt under a dark blazer, and a woman on the right with long dark hair wearing sunglasses and a striped shirt. The overall mood is one of a vast, anonymous crowd with a few distinct individuals.

# *Is* SELF- EMPLOYMENT *for* YOU?

ANYONE *can start a business...*  
*only* FEW *can SUSTAIN a business.*

PAUL E. CASEY

( 1,080 words)

*Are you thinking about taking the plunge into the world of self-employment? The following excerpt on Marketing is from the book, "Is Self-Employment for You?" This book goes beyond the ABC's of how to write a business plan but examines the potential entrepreneur's emotional readiness and personality traits that ultimately make the difference between success and failure. "Is Self-Employment for You?" Author Paul Casey, has been successfully sustaining his communications business for over fifteen years. The book costs \$15.95 and can be purchased by calling visiting Amazon.com and inputting, Is Self-Employment for You?*

## **MARKETING YOUR START UP BUSINESS**

*By Paul Casey*

I believe the number one reason that most businesses fail is that their owners do not understand marketing. If, as they say, "A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing," then the business owner who does not understand marketing is the one who knows just enough to be dangerous.

Understanding marketing concepts will help you to promote your business more effectively. The four key principles are **consistency, simplicity, target, and execution**.

### **CONSISTENCY**

Many businesses believe that a huge advertising budget is necessary to "get the word out." They spend thousands of dollars on super-creative ad campaigns when a small, well-thought-out, and *consistent* marketing campaign will be much more effective.

The trick is to find the right marketing medium for your business. I have seen many companies bounce around from one medium to another, unable to find the "one that

works"—because they never stick with one medium long enough to see consistent results from it. For example, they might start out with direct mail. If they don't get an enormous response to their first mailing, they conclude that direct mail doesn't work. So they switch to running a newspaper ad. After several weeks, the ad still hasn't produced the response they wanted, so they cancel it. Then they might try a radio commercial.

You see the problem? People who don't understand marketing often blame the medium if it doesn't meet their expectations. It's like blaming the messenger for delivering bad news. All of the above mediums work, including radio.

Every marketing medium works for *somebody*. It's up to you to figure out which medium (or mediums) will work best for you and stick with them. You must achieve *consistency* with your medium before you can effectively measure its results. *Never* make a judgement on whether or not a certain medium works based on a frequency of one. If you send out one mailing and receive little response, *send it out again!* Decide at the beginning of the process how many times you will use a certain medium, and stick to that frequency. I believe that a six-month to one-year trial period is the minimum required before you can make an intelligent judgement as to whether or not your direct mail piece is working.

### **SIMPLICITY**

We've all heard the quote: "*Keep it simple, stupid!*" No truer words were ever spoken or written, particularly when it comes to marketing.

Start with a simple name for your business that tells people *exactly* what your company does. If you have a slogan, it should sum up your services and or target audience in a few simple words. Here are some good examples:

- Safeguard Business Accounting: “Meeting the Needs of Small Businesses.”
- Oakbrook Dry Cleaning: “In by 8, out by 5.”

This may seem perfectly obvious, but a surprising number of businesses fail to follow this basic marketing rule. Getting the name of your business right is the most important marketing decision that you will ever make.

Here's another example of two companies that provide the exact same service. One company name tells you exactly what they do. The other does not.

- *"Guardian Security Systems: Commercial Access Systems."*
- *"Dolphin Technology Inc."*

Guardian Security Systems declares in its name exactly what it does. The company even states in its headline that they serve commercial clients. On the other hand, one might assume from its name that Dolphin Technology is a high-tech oceanography research firm. Perhaps they produce locating devices that can be attached to dolphins to monitor their migration patterns. You would never guess from their name that they also specialize in security software.

## **TARGET**

Finding your target audience is a critical component of any marketing plan. Again, this may sound obvious, but I have known too many businesses that did not understand their target market.

## **EXECUTION**

You can be the smartest individual on the planet, but unless you effectively execute your brainstorm or concept, you have absolutely nothing.

More people fail than succeed in the execution of their marketing plans. I can't

tell you the number of times that I have seen great pamphlets, brochures, and publications sent out to thousands of people *with the wrong contact address or phone number!* It does not do your business any good if your potential clients or customers can't call you or find your business. A mistake like this can even make your potential clients reluctant to work with you. *Execution is not only important in marketing, it is also an extremely critical element to the long-term survival of your business.*

### **A WORD ABOUT CREATIVITY**

We have all observed incredibly creative advertising campaigns on television, or on the radio, in print, and in numerous other communications outlets. If you can be both creative and effective in marketing your products or services, more power to you. But there is such a thing as being *too* creative.

After I have watched a humorous or “edgy” television commercial or listened to a radio spot with someone else, I make a point of asking that person at the end of the commercial, “Who was the advertiser?” The commercial may have been a creative masterpiece, but many times when I ask that question, the person doesn’t have a clue as to what company was being promoted. This means the commercial has failed. I have seen too many advertising agencies that are more concerned about winning a creative trophy at an end-of-the-year awards banquet than they are about getting results for the client.

You should never assume that being creative or funny will give you an advantage in advertising your business. Unless you have a huge advertising budget, I strongly recommend that you stick with the basics in advertising your product or services. Resist the temptation to be too funny or indirect with your promotional efforts, no matter what medium you choose to advertise in.

